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ABSTRACT

The professional, systematic procedures school administrators use in selecting teachers and that educational administration departments use in training future administrators who hire teachers are presented in three parts. Part I discusses the pre-interview procedure, which is comprised of a position analysis, applicant paperwork, the recruitment advertisement, steps in teacher recruitment, and credential review. Part II examines the interview procedure. Subtopics include the interviewer's characteristics, interviewer training, the interview team, and interview and teacher selection. Part III analyzes the posthiring process. After a teacher is employed, the entire hiring procedure warrants evaluation. Given the demand for excellence in American education, teacher selection must follow systematic procedures. It is costly, time-consuming, administratively demanding and subject to personal bias. Because of these factors the pre-interview, interview, and post-hiring procedures must be scrutinized so that school systems employ the best-qualified teachers. (JAM)

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TEACHER SELECTION: A TRAINING MODEL
FOR PRINCIPALS

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A Paper Presented for the National Council of Professors
of Educational Administration

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Purpose

This paper presents professional, systematic procedures for school administrators to use in selecting teachers or educational administration departments to use in training future administrators who employ teachers. Selection procedures are divided into the following parts: Part I - Pre-Interview (Position Analysis, Applicant Paperwork, Advertise Position, Teacher Recruitment, and Credential Review), Part II - Interview (Interviewer's Characteristics, Interviewer Training, Interview Team, Interview and Teacher Selection), and Part III - Post-Hiring (Process Evaluation and Conclusion).

PART I
PRE-INTERVIEW PROCEDURES
Position Analysis

When a teaching opening occurs, a detailed, position analysis is developed where present grade level/departmental needs, strengths and weaknesses are examined. In writing job analysis, care is taken to cite job relevant, observable characteristics so that the new hire matches and fulfills organizational needs and expectations (Saville, 1986). Grade level/ departmental personnel and administrator collaborate with the administrator in developing position analysis (Maguire, 1983).

Applicant Paperwork

Individual public schools differ on the paperwork they desire from applicants. Saville (1986) recommended that a letter of application, school district application, resume, placement folder, and official transcripts be required. Caliendo (1986) suggested asking the applicant for a video recording of a teaching segment which provides firsthand insight into teaching abilities. He promoted a required questionnaire which contained four essay

questions on class planning, teaching objectives, familiarity with professional publications and special skills. Besides securing a sample of writing skills, the questionnaire reveals knowledge of pithy educational issues.

Additional applicant paperwork includes district application, university transcript and recommendation letters. With reference to district applications, illegal questions regarding ethnicity, religious-preference, marital status, or handicaps must be avoided. University transcripts provide valuable information because they are accurate predictors of applicant scholarship. Recommendation letters though important offer "clouded" perceptions of candidate performance and potential since references are cautious about putting anything in writing that could later be used against them in litigation. To safeguard against possible legal problems, Goldstein (1986) recommended telephoning references for accurate data.

Advertise Position

Following job analysis and credential requirements, the teaching vacancy is announced locally, regionally and nationally. Local advertisement includes central office communique, district newsletter, school bulletin

boards, churches, community college, university and newspapers. Bitterness and hurt feelings are avoided by carefully informing local people. Regionally, university placement offices and teacher education departments should be notified of the opening. Finally, national advertising via professional associations is especially helpful if "new blood" is necessary.

In advertising vacancies, remember that the school district is on "display": public image is at the forefront. High-quality materials emphasizing school strengths should be developed. Oftentimes, multi-purpose folders with attractive, colorful inserts that describe different programs are useful in dispensing information. Include action photos of students to emphasize the central role that children play in school. Tables and figures that condense data on teacher salaries and benefits, student test scores, class size, and staff development opportunities are helpful in providing applicants with an understanding of the school system (Herman and Stephens, 1987).

Teacher Recruitment

Miller and Sidebottom (1985) stressed the importance of

actively recruiting teachers which enhance personnel longevity and satisfaction rather than relying on people to submit applications. Recruiting is productive for small, rural districts as well as large, urban districts. Usually small systems face hiring difficulties because teachers view them as geographically isolated, low-paying, and lacking in privacy. By recruiting, rural districts emphasize their positives: smaller class size, fewer student discipline problems, greater instructional flexibility and enriched recreational opportunities. Large and urban districts also benefit from recruiting by emphasizing their strong points: better pay, personal privacy, staff development opportunities (because of skilled, supervisory assistance) and benefits. Regardless if the school system is large or small, year-round recruiting is essential for hiring graduates who complete requirements during fall, winter or summer semesters. Through aggressive recruiting, applicants from diverse backgrounds are employed which enriches student learning.

Credential Review

Screening applicant paperwork is an integral part of teacher selection. Teachers should be involved in the screening process because it helps them feel good about themselves.

Gips and Bredeson (1984) found that veteran staff members seldom participated in teacher selection even though greater job satisfaction resulted from asking staff for input. Seventy-six percent of surveyed teachers indicated a strong desire to take part in the selection process for new teachers. When staff is asked to take part in teacher selection, collegiality and collaboration are enhanced.

PART TWO

INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

Interviewer Characteristics

Young and Heneman (1986) pointed out how important interviewers are in teacher selection. They should demonstrate warmth and concern for applicants, knowledge about job openings, alertness to interviewees' body language, willingness to use organizational criteria and objectivity towards applicants. Young and Heneman (1986) raised a controversial issue that is clearly debatable: that is, interviewers's chronological age. Teacher candidates apparently preferred younger interviewers (under 35 years of age) to older interviewers (Young and Heneman, 1986). Even though chronological age might be a factor to some applicants, the important point is that school districts select interviewers who are perceptive, warm and knowledgeable.

Interviewer Training

Jensen (1986) suggested that school systems conduct formal training for interviewers so that uniform hiring standards and practices exist throughout the school system. Training

includes the following items: 1) screening applicants' paperwork for professional presentation of information, clarity of expression, and relevant background; 2) questioning applicants for commitment to accomplishment, effective relationships with students, professional orientation, verbal clarity, classroom management, modeling behavior, instruction strategies and decision-making abilities; 3) verifying references by telephone; and 4) listening skills for applicant weaknesses, strengths, social and personal characteristics. Careful training improves interrater reliability between interviewers and diminishes the role that "personal likes and dislikes" play in teacher selection.

Interview Teams

The last decade many Oregon schools have used interview teams comprised of teachers and community representatives, rather than relying on solitary interviewers. In so doing, a "total school view" is promoted instead of unilateral decision-making (Maguire, 1983). Another advantage is that new teachers receive valuable support when beginning their positions from peers who had input into selection (Jensen, 1986).

Interview

Applicants need to feel comfortable in the interview (Vornberg and Liles, 1983); to establish this positive environment, the interviewer should warmly greet and shake hands with interviewees. By showing sincere interest in applicants, district reputation is enhanced. Regardless if people are hired or not, they should leave with positive feelings about the district. In many ways, the district's climate and reputation are at stake because applicants communicate perceptions about the school system to others. These collective perceptions then help to shape outcomes of subsequent school board, bond and millage elections.

Once "interactive chemistry" is established between interviewee and interviewer, questioning begins in earnest (Jensen, 1986). The following items represent important issues which may be asked by interviewers (Ferguson, 1983).

1. What professional experience or experiences prepare you for teaching?
2. What classroom management strategies will you employ?
3. What frightens you most about teaching?

4. How do you evaluate students?
5. How do you communicate with parents?
6. What caused you to apply in our school system?
7. What are your professional goals?
8. Where do you want to be in five/ten years?
9. How would you describe your educational philosophy?
10. What is your attitude towards students?
11. Are you an optimist or pessimist?
12. Do you stress creative writing in your class? If so,
how?
13. Why do you want to teach?
14. To what extent are you willing to involve yourself with
extracurricular events?
15. How do you describe your previous principal?
16. How do you motivate students?
17. What was your worst instructional lesson?
18. What did you learn from your worst instructional lesson?
19. What hobbies do you have?

Besides specific questions, open-ended questions yield additional insight; some possibilities are presented.

1. Two students get in a fight in your classroom. What do you do?
2. What will you do when a child refuses to complete work?
3. You are in a parent conference to discuss Mary's low academic grades. All of a sudden, the parent says, "Mary is not the problem; she has never had any problem before this year. If you knew what you were doing, she would do just fine." How would you manage the situation?
4. The principal establishes a policy; you are 100% opposed to it. What do you do?
5. You and another teacher are having problems getting along. Describe what you would do.
6. A child tells you he or she is sexually abused. What will you do?
7. You see a fellow teacher slap a child. What is your reaction?

Literally, there are hundreds of questions to ask in an interview, but the important point is to ask questions that generate applicant thinking (Ferguson, 1983).

TEACHER SELECTION

Regardless if single interviewers or interview teams are used, the candidate whose qualities, skills and attitude best meet district criteria should be hired. Once the position is offered and the person has accepted in writing, then other applicants are formally notified and thanked for their interest. Here again, district image is on display so courtesy and professionalism are essential.

PART THREE
PROCESS EVALUATION

After a teacher is employed, the entire hiring process then warrants evaluation. Special attention should be directed toward those areas where difficulties arose. As the school year progresses, formative and summative teacher evaluations are analyzed to see if school system expectations are achieved. If new personnel fail to meet school system standards, then some aspect of selection process was amiss. Once tenure is granted, teachers should be interviewed to determine their perceptions of the selection process. Exit surveys can also be given to personnel who are leaving the district. By having both administrators and teachers evaluate the Interview Process, improvements can be made to ensure quality hiring.

Conclusion

Given demand for excellence in American education, systematic procedures must be followed in teacher selection. Teacher selection is, by its very nature, costly, time-consuming, administratively demanding and subject to personal bias (Morin and Kehoe, 1982). Because of these factors, Pre-Interview Procedures (position analysis, applicant paperwork, position advertisement, teacher recruitment and credential review); Interview Procedures (interviewer characteristics, interviewer training, interview team, interview, and teacher selection); and Post-Hiring Procedures (process evaluation) must be scrutinized so school systems employ the best-qualified teachers to instruct children as well as to exemplify professionalism for immediate and extended school family.

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